

**Minutes of the Forum Meeting held on Tuesday, 9 July 2019
Held in Room 1, Civic Suite**

<p>Present: Maintained Primary Sector: Antoinette Fisher (Governor) Ben Taylor (Head teacher) Bernie Farkas (Head teacher) Karen Scott (Head teacher) Jenny Godsall (Head teacher) Donna Payley (Governor) Paul Jackson (Governor) John McDermott (Governor) Maintained Secondary Sector: no representative present Maintained Special Sector: Andrew Wilkins Jane Davenport Academy Primary Sector: Lynda Mackay (Governor) Academy Secondary Sector: Claire Smith (Head teacher) Pupil Referral Unit: Eleanor Clarke AP Academy: Stephen Steinhaus Post-16 College: No representative present TU Representatives: David Lewis Early Years PVI Sector: Gina Godwin Lisa Whitehouse Officers of the Council: Phil Leivers Steve Fenton Stuart McHale Ann Lowe Ann Pearson Observers: Michele Sadler Sarah Smith Paul Gray</p>	<p>Dorridge Primary School Our Lady of the Wayside School Blossomfield Infant School Greswold Primary School Knowle CofE Academy (proxy arrangement) Yew Tree Primary School Castle Bromwich Juniors St Alphege Juniors</p> <p>Hazel Oak Special School Reynolds Cross Special School</p> <p>Knowle CofE Academy</p> <p>Tudor Grange Academy</p> <p>Triple Crown Centre</p> <p>Solihull AP Academy</p> <p>TU Representative</p> <p>Whitesmore Neighbourhood Nursery/Wise Owls Tender Years Nursery</p> <p>Assistant Director, Learning & Achievement Head of Business & Performance Childrens Services Finance Manager Head of 0-25 SEND Service Team Leader, School Place Planning</p> <p>School Place Planning and Admissions, SMBC Church of England, Birmingham Our Lady of Compassion</p>
<p>Chairperson: Antoinette Fisher – Dorridge Primary School Vice Chairperson: apologies received Minutes: Alison McWilliam, Senior Forum Administrator</p>	

Item	Action																																							
<p>1 Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Councillor Ken Meeson</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Cabinet Member for Children’s Services & Skills</td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Councillor Andy Hodgson</td> <td>Green Representative</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Annette McKenzie</td> <td>Conservative Representative</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Councillor Michael Gough</td> <td>Conservative Representative</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marie Murphy</td> <td>Secondary Maintained Head</td> <td>St Peters RC School</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Louise Minter</td> <td>Primary Academy Head</td> <td>Streetsbrook EY & Inf Academy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Charlotte Shadbolt</td> <td>Secondary Academy Governor</td> <td>Heart of England Academy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Geoff Harley-Mason</td> <td>Secondary Academy Governor</td> <td>Arden Academy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Norman Davies</td> <td>Secondary Academy Governor</td> <td>Langley Academy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Darren Gelder</td> <td>Secondary Academy Head</td> <td>Grace Academy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gillian Clowe</td> <td>TU Representative</td> <td>NEU</td> </tr> <tr> <td>John Callaghan</td> <td>14-19 Sector</td> <td>Solihull College</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Louise Rees</td> <td>Director of Children’s Services</td> <td>SMBC</td> </tr> </table>	Councillor Ken Meeson	Cabinet Member for Children’s Services & Skills		Councillor Andy Hodgson	Green Representative		Cllr Annette McKenzie	Conservative Representative		Councillor Michael Gough	Conservative Representative		Marie Murphy	Secondary Maintained Head	St Peters RC School	Louise Minter	Primary Academy Head	Streetsbrook EY & Inf Academy	Charlotte Shadbolt	Secondary Academy Governor	Heart of England Academy	Geoff Harley-Mason	Secondary Academy Governor	Arden Academy	Norman Davies	Secondary Academy Governor	Langley Academy	Darren Gelder	Secondary Academy Head	Grace Academy	Gillian Clowe	TU Representative	NEU	John Callaghan	14-19 Sector	Solihull College	Louise Rees	Director of Children’s Services	SMBC	
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The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Minutes of Last Meeting (8.5.19)

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3 Matters' Arising

Page 1 Strategic School Improvement Fund – Hazel Oak has made a commitment to support schools and further information will be shared in due course.

DfE Self-Assessment Tool – PL confirmed this had been shared with the Audit team.

Page 4 ARP Provision in Secondary Schools – AP confirmed that conversations were taking place with secondary academies and with the AP Academy.

AF reminded members of the importance of sharing information raised at Forum meetings with their colleagues and collaboratives.

4 Assistant Director's Items – Phil Leivers

Full Council Meeting Tonight

Councillor colleagues and Louise Rees had submitted apologies to Forum as they will be attending the Full Council meeting. A number of school-based items are on the agenda, including attendance by a group of residents opposed to a consultation taking place around the expansion of one of Solihull's primary schools.

ADCS National Conference 4 July 2019

PL attended the Conference, where there was a good DfE and Ofsted presence and interesting speeches (LINKS: [Presidents address](#) and [Ministers speech](#)). The Minister of Children and Families (Nadhim Zahawi) recognised the pressures around the HNB and reassured delegates that he is making a case to the Treasury as part of the CSR process.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

Proposals are being worked up around the resourcing and funding of education representation on MASH (the entry point for safeguarding referrals in partnership with Social Care, Police, Health and Social Housing). Proposals will be presented to schools via Forum/work groups in due course.

5 SEND Update

Following the SEND-focused Forum meeting in May, officers wanted to share a number of updates with Forum members, particularly in relation to the HNB overspend.

Briefing Paper to CLT – Steve Fenton, Stuart McHale

Reference 'DSG Position 2018-19 Out-turn and 19-20+' (NOTE: whilst not P&C, this is not a public document and will not be published on the Forum website. However Forum members are welcome to share its content with school/collaborative colleagues)

The paper, based largely on papers presented to Forum in May, was presented to the Council's Corporate Leadership Team (CEO and Directors) on 18 June. It provides the background to the HNB overspend, summarises local and national issues behind the current position, highlights the five key areas for action (SEND Commissioning Strategy; Inclusion Policy; SEND Processes; Review of Provision and Funding Strategy and Planning) and explains the key implications across all areas (policy, financial, legal, safeguarding, etc. with high regard to impact on customers – pupils, parents, families).

A 'Review of the HNB' has been set up as a formal project, led by PL and supported by a dedicated project team (see Appendix 1). The project's scope will form the basis of the Council's Recovery Plan. SF referenced item 6 of the Project Matrix as areas for initial brainstorming and reports will be brought back to Forum in due course.

PL stressed that the Corporate Leadership Team was fully aware of the pressures schools and the LA are under in meeting the needs of the Borough's most vulnerable young people and see this as a council-wide problem. As such, they have pledged their support in working to resolve the funding crisis.

The following questions were raised:

Q – AF - What is the timeframe for these actions?

A – SF - A consultation will be drawn up during the summer setting out the business case for a top-slice of Schools Block; this will go out to schools in early September with a decision to be made at the 1 October Forum meeting. A request to top-slice 2020-21 budgets must

be made to the DfE by 30 November 2019. At the request of schools’ members, SF agreed to put out a notification to all schools before the end of summer term. SMcH explained that the Recovery Plan requires the approval of the Council’s Director of Finance, so it is imperative that the Plan is robust and achievable. In terms of the political landscape, the CSR is unable to take place until Brexit is resolved and although additional funding is likely to be available in due course, it is unlikely to be enough.

SF

Briefing note to SSSAB – Steve Fenton

Reference ‘Briefing Note to SSSAB and Schools Forum’

Schools appreciated this communication and it provided the basis for debate at SSSAB on 3 July. SSSAB (and some collaboratives) are planning to hold extra-ordinary meetings in early September, for which schools must have all the facts.

The following questions were raised:

Q - JG – The Briefing Note says ‘Solihull will have no choice but to seek a top-slice...’, in the spirit of openness and transparency, what other options have been considered, for example could Solihull consider increasing Council Tax?

A - SF – The DfE has stated that there is no expectation that HNB deficits will be dealt with other than through the DSG, ie. there is no consideration that schools do not have the resources. Solihull Council is now 100% self-funded (from Council Tax, Business Rates and income generated) and no longer receives any grant funding. It is unlikely Elected Members would want to raise Council Tax (every 1% increase equates to around £1m income) and any consideration of this would require a public discussion.

Q – JG – It would be helpful to see how schools’ contribution would fit into the overall scheme to balance the HNB and understand what is actually being suggested. Any top-slice will have a significantly negative impact on school funding, including a negative impact on the proposed Inclusion Strategy. Schools need to have the full facts in early September.

A – SF - A top-slice would provide a relatively small contribution and the Recovery Plan will have a number of additional actions – at present this is likely to be the only way that Solihull can meet the legal requirement of having a balanced HNB within a 3-5 year period. The DfE sees any movement from Schools Block to HNB as a one-off one-year event, however this will not be resolved in a single year. SF will ensure the figures are available for full consultation in early September.

SF

Q – PJ – What if schools do not support a top-slice?

A – JMcD – For 2017-18 the DfE did not approve any requests to top-slice that did not have the support of the authority’s Schools Forum. Individual schools will be consulted in September and each sector’s Forum representative(s) will bring the views of their sector to the 1 October Forum meeting and vote accordingly.

SF - For 2019-20, the DfE received 37 requests, of which they approved 30, it is unknown how many had Forum approval. It was noted that it would be difficult to go ahead with a top-slice without Forum’s approval.

Q – AW - If the top-slice is voted through for next year, what chance is there of having to repeat it the following year?

A – SF - There is no chance of the HNB breaking-even in 2019-20. 83% of LAs do not think they can balance their HNB within 3 years.

0-25 SEND Report – Ann Lowe

Reference ‘Investment in SEND 0-25 Service – Progress Report’

AL delivered a progress report covering the areas of the Children’s Disability team, the StART team, the Educational Psychology Service and SISS. An additional £530k funding was agreed in April 2019, which will fund increased capacity across the service.

The following questions were raised:

Q – BF – Criteria to access SEMH non-traded support cites a child must have received a minimum of five exclusions and have less than 70% attendance. At a time when schools are trying to reduce the number of exclusions, there is concern that this criteria could become a target to be reached before support is available, rather than a threshold.

A – AL – In some circumstances, providing a school can demonstrate they have followed the graduated approach, the support should be made available. AL agreed to talk to Paula Thompson about this. PL agreed we must avoid using the criteria as a target and that this new set of criteria may need reviewing. MS was aware of the child in question and agreed

AL

that support could be made available without reaching five exclusions.
Q - GG – We must be careful to avoid two levels of criteria, where if a child is known to the Service, support can be put in place before reaching the threshold, but a child who is not known to the Service may have to meet all the criteria.
A - AL – It is more about being able to demonstrate that local work has taken place before moving to the next level of support.
Q - LW – It would be beneficial for Early Years to have access to the Educational Psychology Service, particularly when working towards an ECHP and in an early intervention capacity for children with fully recognised SEN.
A - AL – The EY Inclusion Fund was rolled out to respond to this issue. AL will take these comments back to the Service.
Q – JG – Although progress is being made, it would be helpful to have timescales and targets linked to some areas, for example the SEND Strategy and regular reviews of ECHPs.
A – AL – Outstanding actions from the October 2017 Ofsted inspection will form part of the SEND Strategy and will include targets linked to supporting inclusion work. It was noted that the Management of Change process in 2016 was linked to the process to convert from Statements to EHCPs and that since 2014, when the new Code of Practice was introduced, there has been a 40% increase in Plans. SF stressed that each of the five development strands will have action plans and targets attached.
Q – JD – It is good to welcome a CDT social worker, but some families have had 4+ different social workers over a year, often with a duty social worker attending review meetings, offering no continuity of support. How can families be better supported?
A – AL – Solihull has had to rely on agency staff until the additional funding was confirmed, so it is important that we retain permanent staff in order for matters to improve.

AL

Commissioning Strategy Update – Ann Pearson

Reference ‘Update on the SEND School Place Commissioning Strategy’

AP indicated item 3.6 as additional provision that has been put in place in the last three years and item 3.7 as key priorities for future development. The main concern is that new provision is not coming on-stream quickly enough. In particular, plans are moving forward for the ASD Free School, which will respond to the largest proportion of children currently being educated out-of-borough. The planned opening date is 2023, although the LA is pushing for 2022. The Commissioning Strategy, including targets around work still to be done, will be updated in September. The key focus next year will be on primary and secondary ARPs and further gap analysis will be undertaken. In the meantime, Solihull has been successful in a bid for Green Lane nursery linked to Reynolds Cross.

6 **Group Reports**

Reference Work Group Reports

Reports for **Capital WG, Finance WG and EdSEND** were accepted and no questions were raised.

Specifically, Forum approved annual grants for Records Management (£30k), Admissions Service (£253k), Safeguarding Training (£26,500) and LSCP contribution (£13,540).and a de-delegation for maintained schools for TU Facilities Time (c.£132k).

SSSAB met on 3 July and JG provided a verbal report on areas discussed, including:

- An update on Alternative Provision and the new Quality Assurance Framework.
- A Safeguarding update where SSSAB members provided feedback on the Safeguarding Audit and asked that it be streamlined in future.
- Some recommendations were made for schools to increase their email security arrangements.
- Information about the authority’s Troubled Families Strategy and a request for support from schools.
- An update on the SMILE pilot, with a view to rolling it out to all schools.
- Feedback on the Inclusion Charter and a strong steer from schools that buy-in must be at the highest level from the LA across all areas, including Health and Social Care.
- A review of SSSAB’s Strategic Priorities.
- And a lengthy discussion about the HNB overspend.

7	Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2019-20 Antoinette Fisher and Darren Gelder were elected as Chair and Vice Chair for 2019-20.	
8	Date of Next Meeting Tuesday, 1 October 2019 at 5.00pm in Room 1, Civic Suite AF thanked members for attending and wished everyone a good summer break.	